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# REDUCING LIVESTOCK LOSSES

from

*Halogeton*  
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JUL 1 1958  
POISONING

in the  
Western States



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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

# REDUCING LIVESTOCK LOSSES

from

*Halogeton*  
POISONING

## in the Western States

Halogeton,<sup>1</sup> an annual plant of the Western States, has received widespread attention since 1942, when it was reported poisoning sheep near Wells, Nev.

Sheep are most frequently poisoned by feeding on halogeton; cattle may be affected occasionally. Most losses occur when hungry animals are trailed through heavily infested areas.

The toxic substances in halogeton are sodium and potassium oxalates, which are contained in the leaves and all aboveground portions of the

plant. Halogeton becomes more toxic as the growing season advances, and is most dangerous when it is frozen and dry.

Characteristics that make this plant particularly troublesome are adaptability to various conditions of soil, topography, and climate; and prolific seeding habits. The seed is spread by wind, water, animals, vehicles, and other means.

If other desirable forage is available and if animals can select their own feed, they will seldom eat toxic amounts of halogeton.

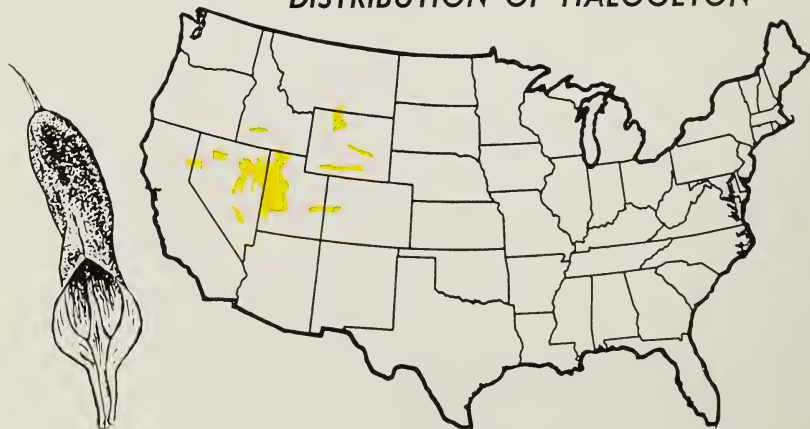
### Where and When It Grows

Halogeton thrives in the salty soils of semiarid regions, especially where soils have been disturbed or where native plant cover is thin or low in vigor. Dense stands are

found on burned-over areas, overgrazed ranges, dry lake beds, and abandoned farm lands, and along railroad beds, road margins, and sheep trails.

<sup>1</sup> *Halogeton glomeratus*.

### DISTRIBUTION OF HALOGETON





**DON'T** allow halogeton to become established on your range. If you find the plant, inform your county agent, who will tell you what to do.



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Halogeton is often mistaken for Russian thistle. The stems are tinged with red or purple, and are branched at the base. The leaves, which grow in little bunches along the stems, are round, fleshy, and wiener shaped. The seeds are usually enclosed in winglike bracts, which almost cover the plant at maturity. The plant belongs to the goosefoot family. A distinctive characteristic of halogeton is a small single hair, about one-twelfth of an inch long, that grows on the end of each leaf.

Halogeton seeds begin germinating late in the winter and continue to do so throughout the growing season. Plants that start growth in August may produce a new seed

crop in November. Germination requires certain temperature and moisture conditions. In the absence of adequate moisture, seeds may remain viable a year or longer.

### **How It Affects Livestock**

About 12 ounces of halogeton will kill a sheep that has been without feed for a day or longer. About 18 ounces is necessary to kill one that

has been feeding on other forage. First symptoms of halogeton poisoning may occur in 4 to 6 hours after an animal eats a lethal dose.

**Early symptoms  
include:**

1. Dullness
2. Loss of appetite
3. Lowering of the head
4. Reluctance to follow the band
5. Drooling and white froth about the mouth
6. Nasal discharge
7. Progressive weakening
8. Rapid and shallow breathing
9. Coma

**Advanced  
symptoms  
include:**

## **How To Reduce Livestock Losses**

You can reduce livestock losses by maintaining a range that supports good forage and by keeping hungry animals away from halogeton at all times. Supplemental feeding may be beneficial, especially while the animals are being trailed or after they have been shipped long distances.

Halogeton will not flourish where natural range plants, such as the

salt sages and sagebrush, are growing vigorously. A program of controlled grazing will permit natural revegetation of plants that can successfully compete against halogeton. Crested wheatgrass will also improve the range and crowd out halogeton, but it can be successfully grown only on good soil and where there is sufficient precipitation.

## **Where To Obtain More Information**

You can obtain more information on halogeton poisoning by getting in touch with your county agricultural agent or by writing to your State agricultural experiment station or to the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Consult your local

veterinarian if you have any questions regarding the treatment of affected animals. *Note:* The map on page 2 shows areas where most livestock poisoning has been reported. It is possible that halogeton grows in other areas.

## ***Know Poisonous Plants • Reduce Livestock Losses***

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